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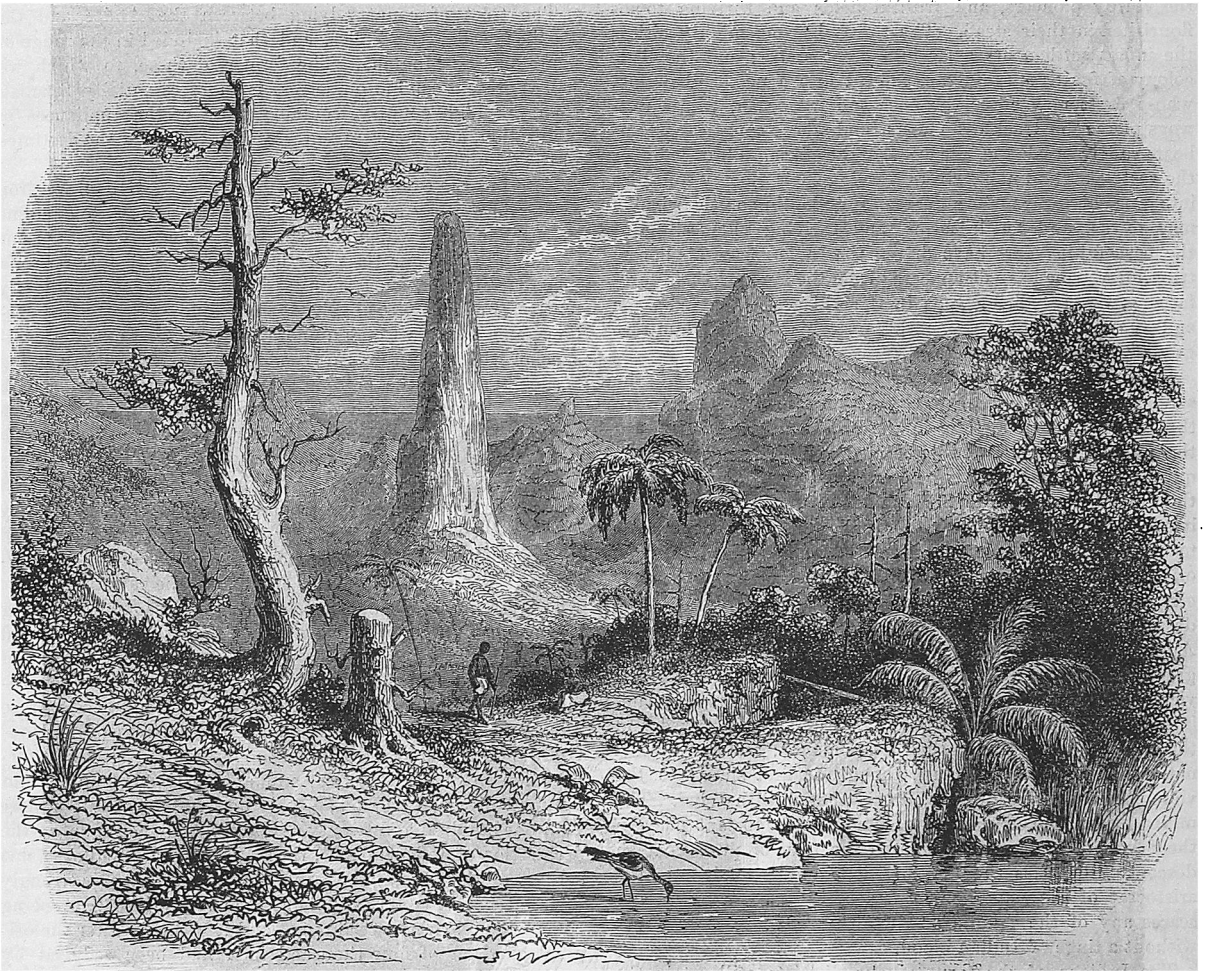
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THE ISLE OF ST. THOMAS, IN THE GULF OF BIAFFRA, WESTERN AFRICA.

A RUGGED soil, black coarse sand upon the shore; black and ferruginous rocks, rising abruptly in the form of needles; rank and luxuriant vegetation, which is pressed together as if for want of space; limpid waters, which reflect the everlasting blue of the sky; half tame birds which give charm and animation to those splendid solitudes;—such are some of the leading characteristics of the four volcanic islands of the little bay of Biaffra, at the extremity of the immense Gulf of Guinea. All these peculiarities appear to owe their origin to some volcanic eruption of nature. The little island of Anno-Bom to the south, is nothing but a volcano; its sides are covered with herbage, and the crater is filled almost to the edge with pure water, calm at the surface, the depth of which has never

of government at St. Thomas, in the little town of Santa Anna de Chaves. The most remarkable object in St. Thomas is the lofty column called the Pico de San Thomé—represented in our engraving—which rises like a colossal tower, the last vestige of some edifice constructed by giants. This natural column, which is from three to four hundred yards in height, and is one hundred and fifty yards in circumference at the base, presents various shades of colour, according to the direction at which the light falls upon it. Some mosses, some tufts of plants, grow here and there upon its surface, which is channelled in various places by the fall of the rain, and by fissures which descend in spiral irregularities from the summit to the ground. By



THE PICO DE SAN THOME.

yet been fathomed. Fernando Po to the north, is not less luxuriant. The centre of Prince's Island, in which grows the pandanus, of which we have already given an engraving, is justly celebrated among travellers as containing some of the most splendid scenery in the world.

The island of St. Thomas, which lies rather nearer to the mainland, has rather more resemblance to the general characteristics of the African soil. The surface is mountainous, traversed by deep ravines, and in the central district, towards the west coast, there is a high peak, the ascent of which is rendered almost impossible by the richness of the vegetation which clothes its sides.

Fernando Po belongs to England; the other three islands are the property of Portugal, which has established the seat

a singular contrast with these vast proportions, the huge trees, which surround the base of this immense obelisk, appear only like diminutive shrubs. Few living beings are ever seen in the neighbourhood, save the dwarf-birds and their species. Innumerable flocks of parrots, the size of our house-sparrows, with a plumage glittering with a thousand different colours under the rays of the sun, are seen flying in every direction. These beautiful birds live upon the wild fruits they find in abundance at St. Thomas; but, as they are also very fond of millet and maize, which this island does not produce, they often alight upon the coast of Africa, and ravage the field, but they never venture to Prince's Island, because they would there meet with a very unpleasant reception from the grey paroquets.